

ORIGINAL

FILED

12/07/2016

Ed Smith
CLERK OF THE SUPREME COURT
STATE OF MONTANA

Case Number: AF 09-0688

Clerk of the Montana Supreme Court
PO Box 203003
Helena, MT 59620-3003

Re: Professional Rules of Conduct- Rule 8.4

Honorable Members of the Court,

12/7/16

Thank you for allowing public comment regarding case number AF 09-0688 on the proposed new Rule 8.4(g) of the Professional Rules of Conduct for Montana Attorneys.

My concerns regarding this proposed new rule center around this new threat to religious freedom as well as a threat to freedom of speech. If a lawyer is a practicing Christian, but is going to be limited in what religious beliefs he can profess and discuss on his own private time, then this rule has gone way too far.

It appears that if lawyers are not allowed to express religious freedom or practice freedom of speech, then none of us will be able to, and that keeps me awake at night. I feel Pastors will be next as folks try to limit what we can say from the pulpit as we read from the Bible.

I am not accusing your court of judicial tyranny and I appreciate the level headedness of our good public servants in the state of Montana. I understand this proposal was directed by the American Bar Association. I am not sure they understand this issue from a rural perspective, as access to legal means is more challenging in a large state like ours with population centers few and far between.

Therefore, I ask the court not to adopt the proposed change to Rule 8.4 of the Professional Rules of Conduct. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share my thoughts.

Sincerely,

Pastor Jay Forseth
Columbus, Montana

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STATE OF MONTANA